



Pony Club Mounted Games Prince Philip Cup

Sunday 8th October 2023

The North Herefordshire Pony Club do it again in the Thistledown Developments Prince Philip Cup

To lift the Cup once is a great achievement, but to lift the Pony Club Mounted Games Prince Philip Cup twice in consecutive years is quite an accomplishment. However the team from The North Herefordshire Pony Club have done it again to be crowned the 2023 Champions in the final at Horse of the Year Show!

Sponsored this year by Thistledown Developments, the Pony Club Mounted Games have been a much-loved part of the show since its introduction in 1957. The idea behind the games was to give children the opportunity to have fun whilst competing without the need for an expensive showing or showjumping horse.

The team of riders representing The North Herefordshire did not have an easy time at the beginning of the week losing out to rivals Oakley Hunt West in the Thistledown Cup held on Wednesday and Thursday afternoon. But in true Pony Club team spirit, the determined young riders pulled it together and made it count when it mattered most.

Astonishingly the team in blue won all but one of the incredibly fought heats, taking place from Thursday afternoon through to Sunday, with a total of six sessions.

A firm crowd favourite, the teams lit up the lively Sunday evening crowd in a display of nail-biting competition. There was just five points in it as they went into the final game – the sack race – but the team hopped over the finish line just in the nick of time.

“It’s the best feeling in the world to have won again!” said winning team member Codie. “I’m incredibly lucky to be here back-to-back years and to win here again. Me and Heidi are on our last year here, so it means a lot.”

And the secret to their success? Codie says: “We manage to keep our cool; it’s not all about ability it’s having the mentality as well to stay calm. The ponies love it, the louder the crowd, the faster they go!”

The North Herefordshire Pony Club team are trained by Iain Hopkins and 17-year-old Sam Hopkins who adds: “We do lots of practice through the winter which takes great dedication.”

The team are made up of the following:

- Jasmine Willis age 14 riding Merlin
- Edward Queen age 14 riding Flash
- Heidi White age 15 riding Cuba
- Lottie Beachus age 13 riding Vee
- Codie Beachus age 15 riding Paolo

- Ellie Simcock age 13 riding Tabby

The second placed team were Atherstone Hunt Pony Club, Lanark & Upperward took third and Oakley Hunt (West) placed fourth.